

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 26, 2018

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are profoundly concerned by recent reports of your administration's actions relating to a resolution on breastfeeding at the World Health Organization (WHO). We were dismayed to learn that your administration not only sought to water down the resolution but apparently did so by employing disgraceful tactics that used threats against foreign partners to advantage the interests of a \$70 billion infant formula industry ahead of maternal and child health here at home and globally.

The evidence for the health benefits of breastfeeding, for those able to do so, has been long established and is broadly recognized. The American Academy of Pediatrics notes that "breastfeeding and human milk are the normative standards for infant feeding and nutrition...[with breastfeeding] result[ing] in improved infant and maternal health outcomes in both the industrialized and developing world." According to UNICEF, 15,000 children continue to die each day with nearly half being newborns. Breastfeeding is key to reducing these preventable deaths. A recent Lancet study found that "over 820,000 children's lives could be saved every year among children under 5 years, if all children 0-23 months were optimally breastfed. Breastfeeding improves IQ, school attendance, and is associated with higher income in adult life."

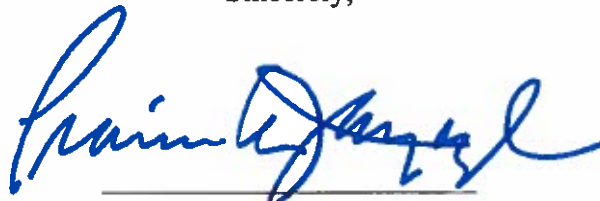
Alternatives, such as infant formula, have a role in the life of a baby, if a mother so chooses or if deemed medically necessary. It does not appear that the infant formula industry was pushing for the dilution of the resolution at the WHO, given broad, global acceptance of the public health benefits of breastfeeding. The resolution was widely expected to be non-controversial and be adopted unanimously, until your administration went out of its way to favor a narrow group of companies, contrary to longstanding U.S. public health policy. This is just plain wrong.

What makes this all worse is that there were also reports of representatives of your administration threatening Ecuador, the original sponsor of the resolution, with trade sanctions and withdrawal of military aid if it did not alter or pull back the resolution. This is not the manner in which the American people expect themselves to be represented on the global stage. Bullying does not work on the school yard; neither does it work in the boardroom. It will certainly not work at international forums either.

During World Breastfeeding Week – August 1-7 of this year – the United States has a chance to show the world that Americans understand the importance of breastfeeding to maternal and child

health. We hope you will urge the U.S. delegation to present a united position again supporting breastfeeding at the next opportunity.

Sincerely,



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Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



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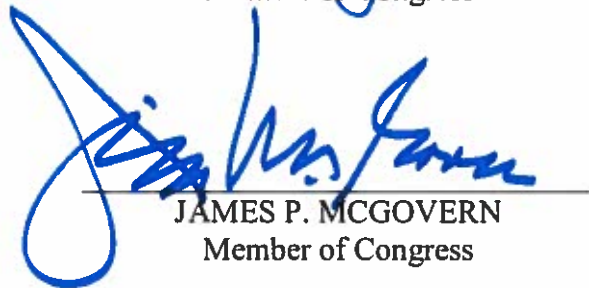
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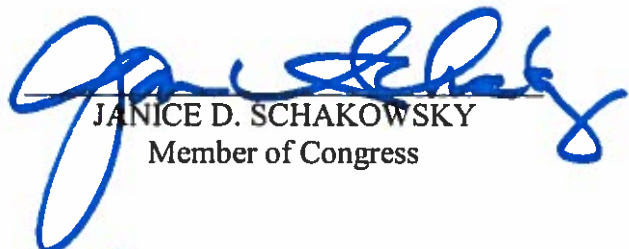
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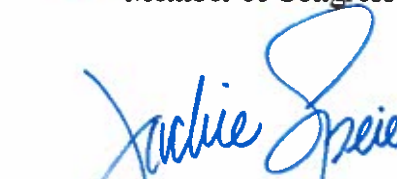

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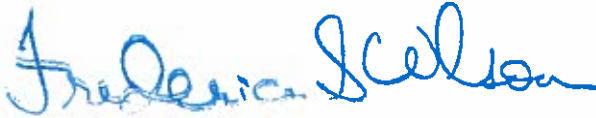

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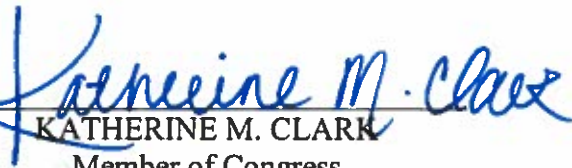
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